



Mayor Michelle Wu

## City of Boston

### INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

#### FAQs for the Rental Program

#### Registration

**1. What is the ordinance that governs rental registration and inspections?**

- [CBC 9-1.3](#)

**2. Do I need to register my rental property?**

- Yes. Every rental property in the City of Boston must be registered each year by July 1. Owner-occupied properties with six or fewer units do not pay the registration fees but still must register each year.

**2. I did not receive an invoice for the registration fees. Do I still owe?**

- The City presently does not invoice for rental registrations. It is the responsibility of the property owner to register by the July 1 deadline each year.

**3. I live at the property. Do I need to register?**

- Yes, you do need to register. If the property contains six or fewer rental units, you are exempt from the registration fees.

**4. I rent out commercial suites. Do I need to register?**

- No. The rental registration requirement applies only to housing units, not commercial units.

**5. What is the deadline for registration?**

- The registration period begins January 1 each year. Properties must be registered by July 1.

**6. Can I register and pay online?**

- You must register your property online.
- All fees can be paid online
- Properties with more than 10 units are required to pay online

**7. How much does it cost to register?**

- The initial registration fee is \$25/unit and the annual renewal fee is \$15/unit, up to a maximum of \$2,500 per building and \$5,000 per complex.

**8. I paid the registration fees in 2015 but received a letter telling me I owe the fees for 2013 and 2014. Why do I owe back fees?**

- Because the ordinance went into effect in 2013, every rental property must be registered each year from 2013 forward. If you acquired the property after 2013, please contact the Housing Division.

**9. I received a letter that I owe fees for 2014, but I have a cancelled check from 2014. Why do I owe more fees?**

- Because the ordinance went into effect in 2013, every rental property must be registered each year from 2013 forward. If you paid in 2014 but did not pay in 2013, the 2014 fee was applied retroactively to 2013, and you still owe for 2014. If you believe you are paid in full, you may bring your cancelled checks or other documentation to the Housing Division, and they will update your account. A complete payment record shows an initial payment of \$25 per unit for 2013 and renewal payments of \$15 per unit in 2014 and 2015.

**10. I received a letter that I owe back registration fees, but I no longer own/manage this property. What should I do?**

- You must pay your back fees and then close your account. You do this by logging into your account and inserting the date you sold the property. If you are a property manager you should remove your name and replace your name with the property owners name and phone number.

**11. What forms of payment are accepted for registration fees?**

- You must pay your registration online if you have more than 9 registrations. We accept credit cards for online payments.
- You may pay online to renew your registration even if you are registering one unit.
- **To whom do I make out the check for the registration fees?**
- If you have 9 units or less and you have registered your property online. You can pay online with a credit card or send a check payable to the City of Boston at 1010 Massachusetts Ave, Boston MA, 02118

**12. What is the penalty for not registering or not paying the registration fees?**

- Properties that are not registered and paid will be assessed a fine of \$300 for every month that the property is out of compliance.

**Inspections**

**1. Do I need to have my property inspected?**

- All rental units in the City of Boston must be inspected at least once every five years. You do not need to have your property inspected until you receive a notice that the property has been selected for inspection by the Inspectional Services Department. If the property contains six or fewer rental units and the owner lives at the property, it is exempt from the inspection requirement.

**2. How often must I have my property inspected?**

- Properties are selected for inspection at least once every five years.

**3. I rent units subsidized by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) or Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP). Do I need to have these units inspected by the City?**

- The City accepts inspection reports less than a year old signed by BHA or MBHP inspectors in lieu of City inspections. Please note that we only accept these reports in the year the property is selected for inspection by the City. There is a \$15 filing fee per report (unit). We do NOT accept reports from Housing Authorities or agencies other than BHA or MBHP.

**4. How much are the inspection fees?**

- The inspection fees depend on how you choose to have the units inspected. You will find more information on the Housing Division website ([www.cityofboston.gov/isd/housing](http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/housing))

**5. I will have the City do the inspections. How much are the fees?**

- The fee is \$50/unit for properties with 1-3 units and \$75/unit for properties with 4 or more units.

**6. I am the owner and I live at the property. Do I still need inspections?**

- If the property is owner-occupied and contains six or fewer rental units, it is exempt from the inspection requirement.

**7. Do I as the owner have to be present during the inspection?**

- Yes, you or an authorized adult must be present.

**8. Can I pay for inspections online?**

- We do not presently offer an online option for paying inspection fees. You can pay in person at 1010 Massachusetts Ave (5<sup>th</sup> floor) by appointment only during the pandemic. If you choose to mail your check to the Housing Division. Checks are payable to City of Boston, in the memo please put the address of the property.

**9. Do I need to get consent from my tenants for the inspections?**

- Yes, you must get consent from each tenant on a form provided by the Inspectional Services Department in advance of the inspection date. There should be a consent form in the inspection notification mailing, or you can download the [consent form](#).

**10. Will I be penalized if a tenant refuses to give consent for the inspection?**

- No. A tenant is allowed to refuse an inspection for up to a year. There is no penalty to the landlord. A landlord may NOT, however, suggest or recommend that a tenant refuse an inspection, nor may a landlord bribe, persuade, or intimidate a tenant into refusing an inspection.